



Emergency Assistance for Children and Families

Families with children have been hit hard by this pandemic and need immediate help.

- Nearly half of all families with children reported having trouble paying basic household expenses during the pandemic, with even higher rates among Black and Latino families – two-thirds of Black families and 58 percent of Latino families.ⁱ
- Research shows that experiencing poverty has long-term consequences for children, especially young children,ⁱⁱ and the longer they remain in poverty without help, the worse the consequences are.ⁱⁱⁱ Allowing this hardship to continue without intervention is likely^{iv} to affect long-term health, school and work outcomes for children of the pandemic.
- Going into the pandemic, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which has lost over a third of its value since 1996,^v only covered about 20 percent of all poor children.^{vi} The number of families receiving TANF basic cash assistance has increased by only 4 percent^{vii} during the pandemic, not reflecting the dramatic spike in need.

The Pandemic Emergency Fund is tailored to provide emergency aid to families who need the help the most. As we tackle the public health emergency, we must ensure that America's children and families are able to afford life's necessities and survive until the economy rebounds.

This subtitle establishes a Pandemic Emergency Fund within Title IV-A of the Social Security Act^{viii} to provide emergency assistance for low-income families with children. The Pandemic Emergency Fund would distribute \$1 billion to all states, Washington DC, U.S. Territories and Tribal TANF programs so they can provide immediate help for families with children.

States, tribes, and territories would be required to use the funds to provide families with Non-Recurrent Short-Term benefits, a defined category that is tailored to immediate cash support and other direct emergency payments to make ends meet during the pandemic, such as emergency housing payments, short-term utility payments, burial assistance, emergency food aid, clothing allowances, and back-to-school costs.

The short-term benefits could be provided in addition to ongoing TANF basic cash assistance for current TANF families and could expand the number of families served during the pandemic by providing immediate cash support or other financial help during this period of crisis.

This legislation combats child poverty by offering a fast path to desperately needed support for families with children.

- The Pandemic Emergency Fund gets immediate financial relief to those who are most in need, without burdening them with pandemic-inappropriate rules such as time limits,

asset limits, work requirements, immigration “public charge” calculations, and without restricting eligibility based on old drug felony convictions.

- The Pandemic Emergency Fund will help Americans remain housed, pay bills, afford diapers and groceries, and care for their children.
- This emergency assistance is a critical bridge, allowing low-income families with children to pay for essentials and mitigate the long-term consequences of a spike in child poverty until the pandemic has receded and the economy has fully bounced back.

Child Population, Child Poverty, and Estimated Allocations for a Proposed TANF Pandemic Emergency Fund by State

State	Child Population (millions)	Estimated Children in Poverty (millions)	Pandemic Emergency Fund (millions)
Alabama	1.088	0.228	\$10.149
Alaska	0.180	0.023	3.349
Arizona	1.640	0.308	14.496
Arkansas	0.700	0.151	4.996
California	8.895	1.364	202.289
Colorado	1.260	0.135	13.469
Connecticut	0.727	0.101	8.298
Delaware	0.204	0.032	2.063
District of Columbia	0.128	0.024	14.598
Florida	4.230	0.737	35.367
Georgia	2.504	0.461	21.935
Hawaii	0.300	0.036	4.189
Idaho	0.448	0.058	4.060
Illinois	2.818	0.436	20.398
Indiana	1.568	0.231	10.671
Iowa	0.727	0.092	6.344
Kansas	0.700	0.101	5.126
Kentucky	1.003	0.212	17.303
Louisiana	1.088	0.289	8.361
Maine	0.249	0.033	3.840
Maryland	1.335	0.157	17.667
Massachusetts	1.353	0.154	27.655
Michigan	2.144	0.371	18.956
Minnesota	1.303	0.143	14.264
Mississippi	0.699	0.192	4.741
Missouri	1.371	0.229	14.463

State	Child Population (millions)	Estimated Children in Poverty (millions)	Pandemic Emergency Fund (millions)
Montana	0.229	0.033	2.725
Nebraska	0.476	0.051	4.432
Nevada	0.693	0.115	6.774
New Hampshire	0.255	0.018	4.107
New Jersey	1.939	0.235	17.197
New Mexico	0.476	0.116	6.359
New York	4.028	0.712	127.908
North Carolina	2.301	0.440	16.780
North Dakota	0.180	0.018	1.369
Ohio	2.578	0.466	33.776
Oklahoma	0.952	0.186	7.114
Oregon	0.867	0.110	12.170
Pennsylvania	2.635	0.435	26.408
Rhode Island	0.204	0.028	4.332
South Carolina	1.111	0.215	10.115
South Dakota	0.217	0.031	2.285
Tennessee	1.510	0.291	12.939
Texas	7.400	1.401	49.441
Utah	0.931	0.091	7.320
Vermont	0.114	0.011	1.614
Virginia	1.861	0.245	15.711
Washington	1.663	0.197	22.635
West Virginia	0.360	0.070	4.591
Wisconsin	1.267	0.168	14.472
Wyoming	0.134	0.015	1.529
Totals 50 States and District of Columbia	73.039	12.000	923.150
Tribal/Territory Set-Aside			74.850
Technical Assistance			2.000
Totals			1,000.000

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) based on data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (CRS) and U.S. Census Bureau. Population estimates are the Census Bureau's population estimates by age and state for July 2019, released in June 2020. Child poverty estimates are estimates of the population under age 18 living in families with income below the poverty line. Those estimates are based on data from the American Community Survey for 2019.

Notes: Estimated allocations are based on specific sources of information. If the HHS uses different data, the allocations to the states would likely also differ. The expenditure information is from the FY2019 expenditure data reported to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under Section 411 of the Social Security Act and posted to the HHS web site on October 22, 2020. The expenditure categories are based on form ACF-196-R, and the expenditures used were the sum of the following reported categories: (1) basic assistance; (2) non-recurrent short-term benefits; (3)

emergency assistance authorized solely under prior law; and (4) emergency services authorized solely under prior law. The child population data are the state resident population estimates for July 1, 2019, released in June 2020.

ⁱ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-recessions-effects-on-food-housing-and>

ⁱⁱ http://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/PathwaysWinter11_Duncan.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/docs/07_02_03.pdf.

^{iv} <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/does-money-affect-children's-outcomes>.

^v <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL32760>

^{vi} <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL32760>

^{vii} <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10036>

^{viii} Section IV-A of the Social Security Act authorizes the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant.